

I claim:

1. A device such as an optical isolator, attenuator, circulator or switch including a combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for dividing an input beam into polarized beams.
2. A device such as an optical isolator, attenuator, circulator or switch including a combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for combining polarized beams into an output beam.
3. A device such as an optical isolator, attenuator, circulator or switch including a combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for dividing an input beam into parallel polarized beams.
4. A device such as an optical isolator, attenuator, circulator or switch including a combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for combining parallel polarized beams into an output beam.
5. A device such as an optical isolator, attenuator, circulator or switch, including a first combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for dividing an optical beam into parallel polarized beams, a second combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for combining parallel polarized beams into an output beam, and a polarization changer disposed between said first combination of birefringent prisms and said second combination of birefringent prisms.
6. A device such as an optical circulator or switch including a first combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for dividing an optical beam into parallel polarized beams, a second combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes for combining parallel polarized beams into an output beam, a polarization changer disposed between said first combination of birefringent prisms and said second combination of birefringent prisms, and a third combination of birefringent prisms with parallel optic axes disposed between said polarization changer and said second combination of birefringent prisms.
7. An optical device as described in claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6, wherein prisms of at least one combination of birefringent prisms are arranged about at least one reflector or refractor.

8. An optical device as described in claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7, wherein prisms of at least one combination of birefringent prisms are arranged about a polarization changer.

9. An optical isolator as described in claims 5, 6, or 7, wherein at least one polarization changer is a nonreciprocal polarization changer.

10. An optical attenuator as described in claims 5, 7, or 8, wherein at least one polarization changer is a reciprocal polarization changer.

11. An optical circulator as described in claims 5, 6, 7 or 8, wherein at least one polarization changer is a nonreciprocal polarization changer.

12. An optical switch as described in claims 5, 6, 7 or 8, wherein at least one polarization changer is a reciprocal polarization changer.